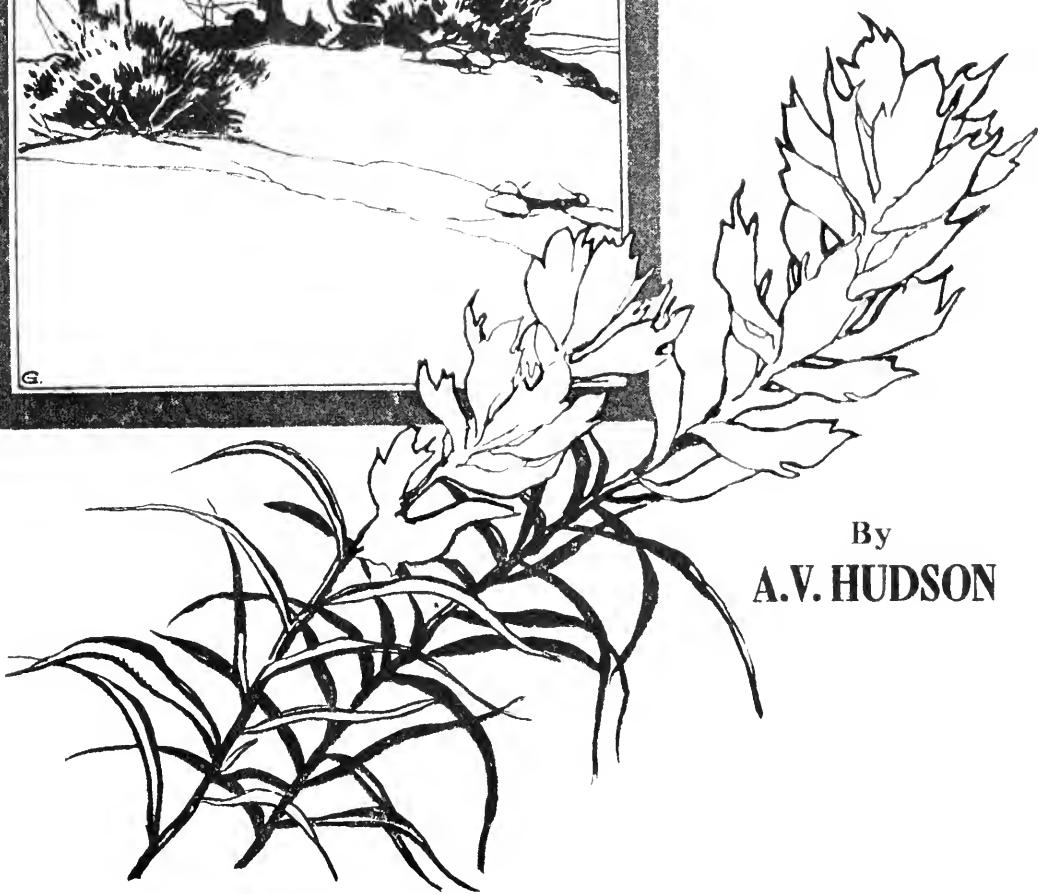


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THE LAND WHERE T H E COWBOY GROWS



By
A.V. HUDSON



THE LAND WHERE *the* COWBOY GROWS

By
A. V. HUDSON

DENVER
THE CARSON-HARPER CO.
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FOREWORD

“**B**ILLY” has long been a visitor of mine who did considerable “pestering ‘round” in the spring of the year. There would be stretches of time when the “Circle A. H.” Ranch wasn’t bothered with him, then some morning he would arrive—horse, dog and entire paraphernalia.

When he was gone, I would pick up the bits of verse he had left lying about. At last these became so numerous it was decided to put a few of them into book form, and for that reason the following “round-up” was made.

I trust that between the lines of these verses you may read the life of one who is not I, but “Billy,” a dream-boy of the hills.

A. V. HUDSON

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Introduction

Gathered together, rounded up,
Natives and “dogies”* in one,
Thoughts that my pencil has trailed along
And lassoed, just for fun.

Others have written for thoroughbreds
And thinkers’ minds have stirred,
But the thoughts recorded in my brand
Are just for the common herd.



*An inferior kind of cattle on the Western ranges.

The Land Where the Cowboy Grows

The sun-kissed West
In romance dressed,
The home of the summer snows,
Where the wily camp-bird builds its nest,
Is the land where the cowboy grows.

The rope keeps time
To the hoof-beats' rhyme,
And the tanning breeze that blows.
From youth to age man's at his prime
In the land where the cowboy grows.

There circles race
And fall to place,
As the lariat he throws.
Across the blue flit clouds of lace
In the land where the cowboy grows.

He's blythe and brown,
He fears no town,
And laughs where'er he goes.
It's there they help the man that's down—
In the land where the cowboy grows.

They sing by rote
And swear by note,
In the home of the sun's repose;
But, it's ladies first, when they go to vote
In the land where the cowboy grows.



The Storm

The clouds, like unwashed wool, go hurrying by
Pursued by the Wind Witches of the sky,
A crack in this dense storm drift gleams with light
And black clouds battle to outrival night;
The trees hold forth their leaves in breathless pause
Then sway subjective to the Storm King's laws.
Quick, drop by drop, how can such clear drops fall
From out yon dark and threatening crepe-trimmed pall?
Down, down, in swifter, splashing flight, they race—
A stream, a torrent, now no drop you trace—
Just one continual, downward, rushing pour.
A constant quiver from the thunder's roar.
But, see! white clinging clouds, like cluny lace,
Go drifting daintily from place to place;
And diamond raindrop, mined from coal-cloud skies,
Gems window ledge and moss, where'er it lies.
Oh, look—a sunbeam smiles across a leaf,
And, though this one wee sunbeam's life were brief
Another follows; then, Behold! the Sun
Smiles on the Earth to say—the storm is done.



Go Away Back, Mr. Satan

Go away back, Mr. Satan, for I'm sure a ridin' free,
And there ain't no use your waitin' or a followin' after me;
In the city you're a steerer, which ain't nothin' very strange,
But you can't come any nearer when I'm ridin' on the range.

Where the birds are singin' sudden, throwin' joy notes to the breeze,
And the wind his organ's thuddin' to the hummin' of the trees;
Where the glowin' sky's a glowin' and the mountains grand I see,
You might just as well be goin', 'tain't no use to follow me.

God Almighty sends His glory shine, a siftin' through the clouds,
From plumb above the timberline to the restless, shiftin' crowds:
And I guess He sends His blessed word to guide me in the town,
But it ain't so easy to be heard as when I'm nosin' round.

Where the peaks in purple splendor, pointin' Paradise, I see,
'Taint no use, you old pretender, there to follow after me.
So, Mr. Satan, hit the hike, for your lasso's hangin' slack
And the mountains are a smilin' like they're glad that I've come back.



The Cowboy's Valentine

Can cowboy's love compete with those
Who write so grandly? Ah, who knows!
Is love to great men more divine
Than love that stirs this heart of mine?
The circles of the lariat
Frame pictures of a face, and yet
A rope of pearls were far more fit
To frame the face I see in it.
A name goes rippling through my mind
With love, I love, entwined, combined;
Ah, would that I owned many herds
Of golden-edged and learnéd words,
And then, one thousandth part I'd tell
Of love that in my heart doth dwell.



When Love Went Riding

We sang and laughed while the ponies pranced,
The winds blew mild, the sunbeams danced;
And I held your hand as we galloped away
Over the hills in the newborn day—

Where the prairie was broad
And life was free,
When love went riding
With you and me.

Remember, dear, how your pony shied
As I stole a kiss on that morning ride?
My own little girl you were that day,
You rode the sorrel and I the bay—

Where the prairie was broad
And life was free,
When love went riding
With you and me.

You went from my life and shadows lay
Over the hills for many a day,
But that memory, dear, you cannot take,
You were mine that once for love's sweet sake—

Where the prairie was broad
And life was free,
When love went riding
With you and me.

If my heart broke, you never knew,
If your heart broke, you hid that, too;
But life and love, and heaven and hell,
Our eyes once dared to each other tell—

Where the prairie was broad
And life was free,
When love went riding
With you and me.



The Homemade Cigarette

There are dreams that come a plenty
When the campfire gleams at night,
There are faces in each planet
When the evening stars are bright ;
I am glad to pass the yarn along
Of most I see, and yet,
Tho I could, I would not tell you
All I tell my cigarette.

Never painter sketched on canvas
All the beauty Nature dealt ;
Never music has been written
Telling all the writer felt ;
Never poet put on paper
All his genius could beget,
For he would not tell all secrets
He has told his cigarette.

If your spirit's on the rampage
And you heave and twist inside,
Then you saddle up at midnight
For a long and furious ride ;
You dismount upon the hilltop
And the whole darned world forget
While you roll and smoke in silence
Just an "ornery" cigarette.

Then the world is still about you
Down the glade and up the hill,
And there comes to mind a female
Who once piously said, "Bill,
Quit your smoke and vote for women."
Sufferin' cats! a suffragette
Talking of emancipation,
Slanderin' you, my cigarette.



Then you're silent, telling secrets
To that brown and slender roll,
Getting next to God and Nature;
Holding converse with your soul.
There's the man who chews the stogie,
And the lad whose pipe's a pet,
But the cowman out in cowland
Smokes the homemade cigarette.



The Free and Easy Way

I'm back among the hills again, to the free and easy way,
To brand the calves and "bust the bronc," and draw a regular pay:
It used to seem a hard old job, just riding day by day.

Then came the news that Uncle Rube had cashed his chips and left;
They buried him, I cashed the draft—it came to quite a heft.
Some friends were gay while some were sad that I was thus bereft.

I settled up some bills I owed and gave the boys a feast,
Then packed my war bag, doffed my spurs and started for the East;
You'd thought, to see me heading out, the President's job I'd leased.

I spieled at balls with crooked sticks and rode in a "machine."
I drank some funny tasting drink out of a high tureen,
I tried to talk and never swear behind a painted screen.

A longing for the cattle range kept coming to my mind,
Something was missing in that show, something I couldn't find—
A smell of leather, jingling spur, a lariat to wind.

One night it all grew tiresome at a chafing party stew,
I was the outlaw broncho that didn't know what to do,
Each member told a story, its limit—to be new.

And when it came my turn to lead no card was up my sleeve,
I had to pass the ante on and just stampede and leave,
While of that bunch of high-grade stuff—not one was left to grieve.

I'm back among the hills again, have donned the spur and leather
To ride and work and night-herd in any kind of weather;
When evening comes, my dog and I will just bunk up together.



Other Men's Dogs

Other men's dogs have died, I guess,
I never gave it a thought
Except a smile about the fuss
Over a dog—a canine cuss;
Why should I worry that blood was shed?
But it's different now, for my dog's dead.

To think some "ornery greaser"
Would murder a dog like Ted;
Murder it is, and first degree
To shoot an old pal such as he;
Don't ask me about the things I said;
It's different when your own dog's dead.

I sure profaned that peon some,
When he met my boot he fled;
To kill a white man's only friend,
It should have been that "Greaser's" end.
What could I do? He had killed my Ted;
The poor little son-of-a-gun was dead.

I buried him by the roadside
A mountain cliff at his head;
Kinnikinnick and columbine
Went in that hole with spruce and pine,
And, well—I'll admit some tears I shed;
It's right at home when your own dog's dead.

The doghouse by the cabin door,
That the quaking-asp o'erspread,
Is nothing but an empty shack
Its owner gone—he can't come back;
For to pound a darned old Greaser's head
Won't bring him back, if your dog is dead.

Tonight the prairie wolves howl 'round—
That pack on dead meat fed—
Chanting about a peon's sin;
But Ted is gone, he can't chime in.
The poor little lovin' cuss is dead;
Sinfully swearin' I go to bed.



Campfire Song

In the evening when the campfire
 Throws its gleams across the night,
In the evening when the campfire
 Writes your name in shades of light.
Every wandering zephyr whispering
 Through the pine trees tells of you
And the dreams we dreamed, while dreaming
 By the campfire, just we two.

Still the blue-bell nods its head
 Above the waters of the spring,
And the columbine is dreaming
 Of the songs the robins sing,
While the whispering wind is lingering
 Just beyond the golden light,
Where the campfire paints your picture
 On the background of the night.

Come Love, where the campfire
 Throws its gleam on the Western sky:
There by its light, Dear,
 We'll whisper, you and I.
We'll tell love's sweet story,
 The story the whole world knows,
 Little Girl, we will dream
 In the golden gleam,
Where the evening campfire glows.



At the Stock Show

Said a thoroughbred to a cowboy's nag,
"Why are you here in the city?
Compared to an animal such as I,
You're truly an object of pity;
With your jogging pace and your downcast face
To me you are quite a stranger;
And do men of mind accept your kind
Out there on the open range, Sir?"

"Hold on, my friend," said the rancher's horse,
"The limits of town are your college;
There are men I know who would laugh and jeer
At you and your boast of knowledge.
It's true I shy at an automobile,
And a gobuzzer surely gets me;
The glare and gleam of city streets
Is the thing that always frets me.

"But could you veer from the horn of the steer,
Or hold him while he's branded?
Do you know the fret of the lariat?
Own up, my friend, be candid.
And why do I hold my head down thus,
Allowing my reins to dangle?
The prairie dog hole would get me sure
If I held my head at your angle.

"What rider has time when throwing the rope,
Or when the herd is stampeding—
It's the law, of course, of the cowboy's horse
To give him the aid he's needing.
This jogging gait you're jeering of
Makes many miles in a day,
Your gallop and trot would soon tire out
When the herd leads off and away.

"You're guided and turned by a side-wise pull,
A martingale holding you down;
And this is the proper way to do
 By a horse that is ridden in town.
I turn at the touch of the rein on my neck,
 The sway of my rider's shoulders;
And watch the place where I set my foot
 When we race o'er the rocks and boulders.

"Yet, each has his own proper place to fill,
 Use good horse sense in filling;
You on my range, or I in your stall,
 We wouldn't be worth a shilling.
But when you hear, the horse must go—
 His place to be filled with motors,
Though they disfranchise the city horse
 Cow ponies will still be voters."



Horse Sense

Horse sense, God! but what it's worth
To us fellers here on earth

That never had no chance to get
Much further than the alphabet;

Just got horse sense,

Nothin' great

To be braggin'

Of to Fate.

And yet,

We can manage to pull through;

Don't know nothin' much that's new,

But when you get us in a pinch
You'll find us winnin', that's a cinch.

Just got horse sense,

Wouldn't trade

For no sense plumb

College made

You bet.



Travelin'

I'm a-travelin' for my health now,
And, say! I'm goin' some;
For the sheriff of the county
Is followin' with a gun.

And if I'm caught on this bay horse,
They'll hang me till I'm dead,
On circumstantial evidence
And things I've left unsaid.

I didn't mention to the man
Who owns this horse I ride
That I should like to borrow him
To cross the Blue divide;

This saddle seemed to fit so well
The back of this bay horse
To leave it hanging in a barn
Quite filled me with remorse.

I started out long after dark
I am so retiring,
And then the moonlight on the range
Always is inspiring.

But, if I'm caught, the range I'll cross
Greater is than this one;
I'll cross it on a swinging bridge
And back I'll never come.

One other way might open up—
'Twould suit me not so well—
To consort with criminal lawyers here,
Or straight with Satan dwell.



The Indian Pink

A strange little flower
With a sun-kissed nose,
Without any perfume,
Yet red as a rose.
Did some Indian maiden
Plant you here
In the footprint left
By the hoof of a deer,
Or are you the symbol
Of blood that was shed
In the feud of the white man
And the red?





The Legend of the Columbine

When God brought forth this world for us
 He planned innumerable pleasures,
In granting which, He counted flowers
 As one of the greatest treasures.

Flowers—like the rainbow tinted,
 But never a flower of white,
Was here when our Lord inspected
 To see that our home was made right.

Then came an envoy from heaven
 With a gift from the shining throne,
Of flowers with golden centers
 And a beautiful white in tone.

Her arms heaped high with these treasures,
 An angel came down from above
And scattered abroad the white flowers
 As a symbol of God's great love.

At last, but one fair white blossom
 Remained in the bright angel's hand;
She had scattered well her burden,
 O'er the silent and sleeping land.

For the mountain tops she started;
 And, thinking of Heaven and home,
Still carrying this tall white flower,
 She arose toward the arching dome.

Far up, above the highest peaks,
 In the blue of the Western skies,
She thought of the gift forgotten
 And lowered her beautiful eyes.

*The Land where the
Cowboy Grows*

Then, seeking a place to plant it,
She paused on the great mountainside;
But the flower—dipped in skyland—
A wonderful blue had been dyed.

She tried with her tears to cleanse it,
And thus wash the blue tint away;
But, tho the center was golden,
The blue was a blue that would stay;

Quickly, she plucked from her pinion
Five feathers of silvery white,
Forming a circle so deftly
And binding the edges so tight,

She placed this feathery circle
Within the bright circle of blue,
The white of her wing for petals
With the petals of azure hue.

It was blue and white and golden,
The sky-land, the snow-land, the gem;
Its perfume the breath of angels.
It dropped from a tall, slender stem.

Planting this flower on the hillside
She watered it softly with dew.
And, Lo! Behold! the Columbine
On the Rocky Mountains grew.



Timberline

Up at timberline, how strange
To see beyond this dead line
No trees grow on the range;
There they stop, nor advance one step
Into this upland region so high;
Only bunch grass and boldest flowers
Can venture so near the sky.
Oh, ye mighty pines of valley and hill!
How puny you look at this height,
Tho you sway and toss and beat your arms
To show your greatest might
And all your beauty.
Think, not even the whispering trees
Nor the noisy chattering stream,
Only bunch grass, stirred by the breeze
And tiny flowers from moss beds spring.
While Nature, painting her seasons
In colors of greatest splendor,
Across this line—by the Master drawn—
With trembling fingers can send her
Somberest colors only
Into this region lonely.
A prayer from your heart
Trembles up to your lips
As you look far off
Where the blue sky dips
And forms a tent
From this summit bent.
As you feel the presence of Almighty God
When you hear the ocean's roar.
And see the waves, how they dare to go
Just so far up on the shore,
Or beat at the foot of some rugged cliff
As they must forever more,
So you feel the power of a Glory Divine
When you stand on the summit, 'bove timberline.



A Sonnet

When summer's rose-tipped cloud shall cease to glow
And purple mountain take a sadder hue,
When soaring eagle spurns the heaven's blue
And slowly skims the earth beside the crow ;
Oh, then, dear maiden, will you come to know
That I have ceased my worship love of you
And in my heart the spirit sweet and true
Which was of you the thought, has slipped below
Some wicked image, which, but newly made
To fill my heart, has blotted out the light ;
And that some horrid witchery was played
To take from me my mind in one dark night ;
Then know, that with my living wit you stayed
And vanished only in this maddening blight.



When the Lasso Scored

Say, Bill ! you mind that cowbow dude
Rides with the 4T boys,
Wears the chaps with the frescoed belt
And the hat with silver toys ?
You know ! he rides a brown cayuse,
Brand—double circle A.
Say, Bill ! he throws the slickest rope
I've seen in many a day.

Last Sunday, I rode up to Pete's,
To help him brand some mules,
And after I'd gone all the way
He didn't have the tools ;
So while he built a brandin' fire
And patched a broken gate
I rode to Dan's to get the irons
Which helped to pass the wait.

Just as I crossed the Wilson bridge,
Me joggin' along right slow,
I saw, a comin' down the ridge,
This dude, cowpuncher beau.
And down the road, close by the creek,
Was Wilson's youngest gal—
The one that has the bay-gold hair—
Ol' Wilson calls her Al.

She was a ridin' mighty slow
On Wilson's pinto mare,
The reins was just a hangin' down
And swingin' in the air.
Ol' Wilson's "Paint" was joggin' 'long,
Just dozin' in the sun ;
You'd never think to see her now
How that ol' mare has run.

And then I saw what made my hair
Stand right straight up on end,
There, on the cliff that overhangs
The road around the bend,
A yellow spot, it seemed at first,
Took shape as it came near;
'Twas creepin', creepin' right along
To where the cliff falls sheer.

This long, lank, yellow body
Made me shiver in the sun;
I cussed the luck that sent me there
Yet made me leave my gun.
That yellow cat was creepin' on,
And watchin' up the trail
And creepin', creepin' nearer,
I could see it switch its tail.

While Alice was ridin' 'long,
Straight to her very death,
'Twas then I saw another sight
That made me hold my breath;
The 4T boy, his horse a-run,
Was comin' down the ridge;
He'd seen the danger from above
While I was on the bridge;

His hat was off, his rope was up,
Spurrin' like the devil;
You know the slope is gradual there
Above the cliff, most level;
But now the cat was doubled up
And ready for its spring—
That pinto mare was joggin' 'long
As cool as anything.

Straight into the air sprang the mountain cat—
 But the rope shot out ahead,
Then dropped right back around his neck :
 I saw him hangin' dead.
The horse was standin' forefeet braced,
 The cowboy's face was pale,
While down below, all safe and sound,
 Was Alice in the trail.



♦

Vamose

When you see the silver circle
 Of the moon a swingin' low,
When you hear the frogs a croakin'
 Where the water mosses grow;

With a banjo, and a hammock,
 And a girl, my goodness me,
What more can mortal man expect
 Is more than I can see.

But when the silver moon sinks down
 Behind the jagged hills,
And when the hammock sways away,
 While darkness 'round you spills,

When the banjo quits its talking
 And the Night-Wind whispers low,
You're mighty apt to get engaged
 If you don't get up and go.



Anemone

Anemone—thou dainty flower
That greets us e'er the snow departs,
Thy soft blue petals find the way
That leads directly to our hearts.

Art thou the first of many gems
That form the flower crown of Spring,
Or dost thou 'broider with thy blue
The royal robe of Winter's King?



Homeward

The car wheels whisper,
"Free, you're free;"
The old hills call
And beckon me:
The old love waits,
The old friends smile,
And the wheels click off
Another mile.

I laugh, tho' I cry as I say good-by,
But away where the willow bends
To kiss and touch with a whispering sigh
The lilting waters hurrying by
Is the world of the tiny friends:
The green beneath, the blue above,
The world of beauty and life and love.

Oh, the world is gay where the children play
'Neath the trees through the singing hours,
The world of birds that dip and sway
Through the living light of the laughing day.
The world of bees and flowers.
The green beneath, the blue above,
The world of beauty and life and love.

The car wheels whisper,
"Free, you're free;"
The old hills beckoning
Call to me:
The old friends wait,
The old loves smile,
And the wheels whirr off
Another mile.





Loneliness

The coppery sun, low hanging in the sky,
Grows redder as it nears the place the eye
Marks the horizon far; and then, between,
The early evening dust clouds intervene.

The parched and burning sagebrush, whose dull gray
Is stretching to the skyline, far away,
Seems like the ocean, waiting for a storm,
Except that here no sea breeze blows; 'tis warm.

A gray adobe hut sits on this waste,
A darker gray, 'tis, on the sage gray placed;
Before the door, just one the cabin's boast,
Is planted in the earth a snubbing post.

A saddle, with a bridle lying by
An irrigating ditch that's almost dry:
And to the left, upon the desert's floor,
A dying horse a sun-bronzed man bends o'er.

A dying horse, no more, no less,
Receives this strong man's tender, soft caress;
Is called by him a harsh but loving name—
"Good-by, you damned old geezer, you've been game;

"We've fought it out together, you and I
Have lived this hell of dreariness—good-bye."
The twitching muscle has at last grown still,
And through the warmth there creeps a sudden chill:

The man, low bending, marks the glazing eye.
That, gazing upward, apprehends no sky:
The sun has fallen slowly out of sight,
A coyote howls, then all is still—'tis night.



The Price

A sorrow in a dreamer's heart
Bore fruitage in a song,
And once again grief played a part—
A picture came along.
For birth of thought with things worth while
Is pain and tears hid by a smile.

We dream along through summer glow
And drift from day to day;
The softest, gentlest things but grow
When pleasure leads the way;
A life made bright by things desired
Ne'er brings the flame that grief has fired.

Who dares expect the golden crown
And miss the hemlock cup?
What issue great has ever grown
Without the bitter sup?
And yet, we deem our hero blessed
Because a tomb is statue dressed.



The Cypress Song

A little while we stay upon this earth,
A little while, and pass to death from birth;
 Oh, dare we then take all that Nature gives
Nor leave a tribute that will show her worth?

'Tis hard a man-made technic to attain
When simple bird-song sings so sweet a strain;
 But should one garner always from this land
Of plain and mountain and the call disdain

That bids him to a brother pass the word
And try to tell him of the things he's heard?

 Yet fears his stumbling speech can ne'er convey
The wonder music that his own heart stirred.

A strange insistence bids that I pass up
To town-tired brother Nature's brimming cup
 That he may quaff the nectar of the hills
Whose magic vintage should the weary sup.

A golden goblet might hold such a drink,
A gem-set chalice it should be, I think;
 Oh, dare one offer in a broken vase
The lethe'd nectar from the cañon's brink?

They told me in the city I could find
The silver word that frees the tongue-tied mind,
 The phrase that rounds the sentence into Art
And liberates the thought of all mankind.

But I, so slow in speech, so poor in word,
Just one small atom of the common herd,
 Who gathered slowly of the city's ways,
Was segregated as a man absurd.

On me they looked with pity and disdain
While some the stinging jeer could scarce refrain
As poor in pocket, poor in speech, I stood
And watched the passing of the pageant train.

Back to my dog and horse and hills I've come
Still dreaming and still worshiping, still dumb;
But yet not able to abate the sting
Of lack to sing my lands encomium.

'Twere better to dwell here, where Nature flings
In great abundance her sweet offerings,
Displaying lavishly her beauteous store
And giving me some gifts denied to kings.

For he who knows the language of the hills,
Who at the call of every wild thing thrills,
Whose music is the bird and waterfall,
Finds jarring discord in the noise of mills.

And, lying on Earth's breast beneath the pine,
I gaze across where valleys intertwine
And narrow into cañons, scarped, unscaled—
The sculptured wonders of a hand Divine.

Ask not a city with her hurrying feet
Her towering buildings and her gleaming street.
These all are wonderful, but I love best
The land where hill and heaven seem to meet.

Oh, why should I this duty undertake,
Why strain against the thing I cannot break?
For one will come to paint with living word
And then, I know, man's heart will hear and wake.

So I, perhaps, would better pass along
And selfishly enjoy the World's great song.

Nor try in broken phrase to offer up
This Wine of Wonder to a passing throng.

But when the Mountains know that he has come
The one to praise them, who will not be dumb -

Oh, may they keep some memory of me
Who longed to sing, but who could only hum.



The Cash In

Simple stories, simply told,
Ripples that play on the sand,
These are the things recorded
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